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April 24, 1997

PSC MEMBER BOB ROWE TO CHAIR NARUC'S COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE

Public Service Commission member Bob Rowe of Missoula has been appointed chairman of the Communications Committee of the National Association of Regulatory Utility Commissioners, effective May 5. NARUC is the association of state utility regulators.

Rowe is currently vice chairman of the committee. The Communications Committee is working to address the complex issues involved with the implementation of the Telecommunications Act of 1996, including preserving and expanding universal service, local telephone competition, and telecommunications modernization.

"This is an exciting and important time to be working on telecommunications policy. It's especially important to ensure that Montana and other rural states are represented as decisions are made nationally and that our citizens share the benefits of modern telecommunications," said Rowe. "I'm very honored to lead the hardworking Communications Committee. I look forward to working with them, the Administration, the Congress, the industry, and consumer groups to achieve the goals of last years' Telecommunications Act, and achieve real benefits for citizens."

Upon announcing the appointment, NARUC President Bruce Ellsworth of New Hampshire said, "As vice chair, Commissioner Rowe has ably demonstrated his qualifications, and I am gratified that he has agreed to serve as chair."

Rowe will be succeeded as vice chair by Joan Smith of Oregon and Russell Frisby of Maryland.

Rowe, 41, was elected to a second term on the PSC last November. Prior to joining the PSC, Rowe was a public interest lawyer in Missoula, concentrating on utility law and policy.

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